

## **2014 ACTFL HINDI PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES – SPEAKING\***

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### **DISTINGUISHED LEVEL**

The Distinguished level speakers of Hindi are characterized by the ability to:

- Participate & reflect spontaneously in a wide range of global issues and abstract concepts;
- Use persuasive and hypothetical discourse for representational purposes in professional contexts;
- Tailor language for a variety of audiences in a culturally appropriate manner; and
- Use a wide range of vocabulary, and structures to express semantic nuances.

### **DISTINGUISHED**

Distinguished Level speakers of Hindi are able to reflect and participate spontaneously on a broad range of professional and global topics at the abstract level within personal, ethical, philosophical and societal contexts. They can counsel, persuade, convince and advocate a point of view other than their own effectively and in a culturally appropriate manner. They are skillful in tailoring their speech and register for a variety of audiences and contexts in a culturally appropriate manner.

Speakers at the Distinguished Level produce highly sophisticated, precise and tightly organized extended discourse with a variety of discourse and syntactic strategies. When appropriate, they can also speak succinctly using appropriate cultural and historical references to convey more in fewer words. At this level, speakers control a broad range of academic vocabulary and idiomatic expressions for handling professional communicative exchanges typically involved in public speeches, debates and discussions.

Distinguished level speakers make no patterned errors, but they may have non-native accent, limited control of deeply embedded cultural references and/ or occasional isolated form related error.

### **SUPERIOR LEVEL**

**The Superior level speakers of Hindi are characterized by the ability to:**

- **Participate fully and effectively in most formal and informal settings on a wide range of topics of general interest and some special fields of interest;**
- **Handle topics from both concrete and abstract perspectives;**
- **Support opinion with arguments and develop hypothesis using extended discourse when appropriate; and**
- **Use a wide range of grammatical structures with no patterned errors in basic structures.**

## **SUPERIOR**

Superior level speakers of Hindi are able to communicate with ease, accuracy and fluency on a variety of topics in formal and informal settings from both concrete and abstract perspectives. They can handle a variety of topics of general interest and their special field of competence in detail and effectively. They are able to express and support their opinions with well structured arguments at the issue level on a number of social and political issues of interest to them. To illustrate and strengthen their viewpoint, they may include personal references also to describe and/or explain their reasons. Superior level speakers are able to construct and develop hypotheses to explore alternative possibilities; they can consider opposing sides of an issue and respond to counter arguments by introducing additional evidence.

The Superior level speakers of Hindi have a solid control of basic grammar. They can use a variety of complex and less frequent structures of Hindi such as participles (ठंड से ठिठुरते हुए लोग), embedded passives (...शुरू किया जाने लगा) and clause level nominalizations (इस काम में सरकार का हस्तक्षेप करना...) accurately. They can employ a variety of syntactic, lexical, phonetic and discourse strategies for expressing semantic nuances, highlighting new information, separating main ideas from supporting information, etc. Superior level speakers of Hindi are skillful in using appropriate variety of Hindi - Hinglish, High/*shudh* Hindi, or Hindustani - depending on the content and context.

Speakers at the Superior level demonstrate no pattern of error in the use of basic structures of Hindi. There may be sporadic errors in the use of low frequency structures or vocabulary, but they virtually never interfere in communication. Superior level speakers' discourse organization may be influenced by their dominant language, but it does not hinder communication or disturb a native interlocutor.

## **ADVANCED LEVEL**

**The Advanced level speakers of Hindi are characterized by the ability to:**

- **Participate actively in most informal and some formal conversations on topics of personal and general interest;**

- **Narrate and describe in major time frames (present, past and future) using paragraph-length discourse;**
- **Deal effectively with an unexpected situation with a complication; and**
- **Use basic structures with consistent control.**

### **ADVANCED HIGH**

Speakers at the Advanced-High level are able to function at the Superior level most of the time. However, they are not able to sustain their performance at that level consistently. Advanced-High speakers may demonstrate limited ability to handle abstract level tasks in formal contexts. They may not be able to express their supported opinion with well structured detailed arguments by staying at the issue level consistently. Instead, they may handle Superior level tasks at the Advanced level by providing concrete level description or narration, and supported arguments in the form of personal anecdotes. Advanced-High speakers are most comfortable in handling topics at the concrete level, but they can discuss some topics of their personal and professional relevance at the abstract level.

Advanced-High speakers of Hindi can perform Advanced Level tasks - narration & description in different time frames - with linguistic ease and confidence. They can engage in conversations in a clearly participatory manner on personal and social topics using well connected paragraph-length discourse. They have a consistent control of all the three tenses, aspect, and basic grammar of Hindi. Their control of less frequent structures, such as presumptive, hypothetical and passive may be uneven (उसको अपनी गलती का एहसास हो चुका होगा।; मैं आ सकता तो जरूर आता।; काम समाप्त करवा दिया गया है।) at times. Occasionally, they may grope for precise vocabulary but their discourse never comes to a complete halt because of their confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing, circumlocution, and code-mixing.

Advanced-High speakers can be easily understood by the native speakers despite their linguistic breakdowns that may occur in the form of errors in the use of less frequent structures, decrease in fluency or repetition of arguments.

### **ADVANCED MID**

Speakers at the Advanced-Mid level participate actively in most informal and some formal exchanges on a variety of concrete topics relating to family, work, school, and leisure activities, as well as topics relating to general public and personal interest. Advanced-Mid speakers can narrate and describe in past, present, and future tenses by providing a full account in a paragraph-length well connected discourse. Their narration and description tend to be intertwined in story telling; events are logically sequenced and they demonstrate a good control of aspect. Advanced-Mid speakers can handle linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events in a routine communicative situation (e.g., reporting a theft or an accident) with ease and confidence.

Advanced-Mid speakers of Hindi demonstrate a consistent control of basic Hindi grammar including the use of ने (agentive marker). They can background or foreground

information through a solid control of word-order and relative-correlative constructions (जो-वह; जितना-उतना, etc.). Advanced-Mid speakers demonstrate a substantial flow of speech which is maintained by communicative strategies such as circumlocution and/or rephrasing. Heritage speakers of Hindi are particularly skilled in using communication strategies, such as gaining recall time (e.g., वो, उसको क्या कहते हैं...), code-mixing (e.g., unemployment rate तो बहुत बढ़ गया है।), confirming meaning (e.g., राजनीति का मतलब politics है न?) and eliciting language help (e.g., corruption को हिन्दी में कैसे कहते हैं?). Advanced-Mid heritage speakers of Hindi tend to have a broad range of everyday vocabulary used in informal contexts but their formal Sanskrit-based vocabulary is often limited.

Advanced-Mid speakers are readily understood by the native speakers of Hindi not accustomed to dealing with non-native speakers of Hindi in spite of occasional interference from speakers' dominant language. The interference may be in the domains of phonology (e.g., confusion between short and long vowels - बहार and बाहर) and/or structures (e.g., मेरे पास कोई भाई-बहन नहीं है।). When required to perform Superior level tasks, Advanced-Mid speakers either avoid them or perform them at concrete level with personal anecdotes and faltering accuracy.

### **ADVANCED LOW**

Speakers at the Advanced-Low level are able to handle a variety of informal and some formal communicative tasks, though somewhat haltingly at times. They can handle everyday topics of personal relevance pertaining to family, school, home, work and leisure activities with ease and confidence. When dealing with topics related to public and community interest, such as economy, politics and education, their degree of linguistic ease and quality of language is limited.

Advanced-Low speakers of Hindi can narrate and describe in present, past and future tenses at a paragraph-length discourse consistently; their control of aspect is limited at times. In the speech of Advanced-Low speakers, narrations and descriptions are not always interwoven; instead they tend to be separate. When pressed for a fuller account of a story or description, they often produce limited discourse for the level, which is often not more than a single paragraph. Advanced-Low speakers have a limited formal vocabulary for dealing with topics of general public interest, such as unemployment and poverty. Advanced-Mid speakers' flow of Hindi is somewhat irregular at times and self-corrections may be noticeable in low frequency structures (e.g., passives, relatives).

Advanced-Low speakers can perform the Advanced level tasks consistently, though minimally. They can use communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution successfully. Most heritage speakers can plug in English words and expressions confidently according to the norms of conversational Hindi, and their speech tends to be loaded with colloquial features, such as मेरे को instead of मुझे; पे instead of पर; नई

instead of नहीँ (loss of 'h' sound). Interference from their home language or dialect may be evident in their speech, such as absence of ने 'ne' in the speech of those who come from eastern Hindi (e.g., Bhojpuri) speaking families.

Despite some grammatical and discourse roughness in the speech of Advanced-Low speakers of Hindi, they can convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion. Their speech is readily understood by the native speakers without any special effort.

## **INTERMEDIATE LEVEL**

**The Intermediate level speakers of Hindi are characterized by the ability to:**

- **Create with the language by combining and recombining learned elements on topics of personal needs and day-to-day activities;**
- **Ask & answer questions; Initiate, minimally sustain, and close a straightforward survival situation; and**
- **Use basic grammar with partial control.**

## **INTERMEDIATE HIGH**

Speakers at the Intermediate-High level are able to handle Advanced Level tasks most of the time but not consistently. They can narrate and describe in present, past and future tenses using well connected paragraph-length discourse, but not all the time. They can handle a situation with a linguistic challenge but not always successfully. Typical features of breakdown in the speech of Intermediate-High speakers include inability to speak in paragraphs consistently, reduction in breadth and appropriateness of vocabulary, increased errors in basic grammar (e.g., noun-verb agreement, oblique forms) and difficulty in maintaining the appropriate use of tense and aspect during story telling. Intermediate-High heritage speakers of Hindi are particularly weak in their control of formal vocabulary (e.g., शोषण, भ्रष्टाचार, पर्यावरण,) required for dealing with topics of general interest, such as corruption and environment.

Intermediate-High speakers are able to converse with ease and confidence when dealing with routine communicative tasks and social situations of the Intermediate Level. They can handle successfully straightforward tasks, such as ordering a meal, making travel reservations or leaving a phone message. They can ask and answer a variety of questions and handle successfully topics of personal interest relating to family, work, school, recreation, etc.

In spite of the influence of their dominant and/or heritage language and some lapses in comprehension, Intermediate-High speakers of Hindi can generally be understood by the native speakers of Hindi who are not accustomed to dealing with non-native speech.

### **INTERMEDIATE MID**

Speakers at the Intermediate-Mid level are able to handle a variety of simple communicative tasks in straightforward social situations pertaining to self, family, friends, home, recreation, etc. They are able to express personal meaning by creating with the language. In response to direct questions or simple requests they can produce simple sentences in Hindi by combining and recombining known structures and vocabulary. Although, they are mostly in a reactive mode, they can ask a variety of simple questions (e.g., आप कहां से हैं?; यह कितने का है?; यह कौन है?) when asked to do so.

Intermediate-Mid speakers can successfully get in and out of simple transactional situations related to physical and social needs, such as ordering food, shopping, hiring a rickshaw.

When required to narrate a story or describe a situation, Intermediate-Mid speakers generally produce strings of loosely connected sentences linked with simple connectors, such as और 'and' & लेकिन 'but'. Intermediate-Mid speakers typically have a partial control of the basic Hindi grammar (phonology, morphology and structures). They often exhibit a consistent control of present tense; their control of past tense (especially perfective forms) and future tense is often uneven. During speech, their focus is mainly on form because their accuracy tends to fall apart when paying attention to meaning. Their break-downs include awkward pauses, reformulations, self corrections and patterned errors in the use of basic grammar (e.g., oblique forms, adjective-noun agreement, verb conjugations, ने 'ne', dative subjects). Misunderstandings occur because of their limited vocabulary, grammatical inaccuracies and structural influence of their dominant or home language.

Intermediate-Mid speakers of Hindi are generally understood only by those native speakers of Hindi who are accustomed to dealing with non-native speech. When called on to perform Advanced level tasks, Intermediate-Mid speakers can only produce strings of loosely connected sentences because they have difficulty in linking ideas, manipulating time and aspect required for producing a cohesive a paragraph.

### **INTERMEDIATE LOW**

Speakers at the Intermediate-Low level are able to handle successfully a limited number of simple communicative tasks such as introductions (मेरा नाम --- है।; मैं शिकागो से हूँ।), shopping (मुझे एक कुर्ता चाहिए।; इसका दाम क्या है?), ordering food (एक प्लेट समोसा दीजिए।) and routine exchanges in predictable social situations (आप से मिलकर खुशी हुई।). They can ask and answer simple questions pertaining to self, family, personal preferences and some immediate needs (e.g., आप को क्या पसंद है?; आपके माता-पिता कहां रहते हैं?; मुझे एक लिम्का चाहिए।).

Intermediate-Low speakers of Hindi consistently create with the language even though most of their sentences are skeletal and laboriously produced. The quantity and quality of Intermediate-Low level speech is significantly limited as compared to the Intermediate-Mid level. Intermediate-Low speakers often have only partial control of the basic phonology, morphology and structures of Hindi. Most of their sentences may be fractured in terms of grammatical accuracy. They are most comfortable staying in present tense, although they may have partial control over the past and future tense forms. Intermediate-Low speakers often use English words and phrases as a crutch to overcome their weakness in Hindi vocabulary.

Because of their limited vocabulary, frequent pauses, ineffective reformulations, self-corrections, and influence of the dominant language, Intermediate-Low speakers of Hindi can be understood only by the sympathetic native speakers of Hindi.

## **NOVICE LEVEL**

**The Novice level speakers of Hindi are characterized by the ability to**

- **Communicate minimally in basic everyday survival situations; and**
- **Use memorized utterances, word lists and phrases.**

## **NOVICE HIGH**

Speakers at the Novice-High level are able to perform Intermediate level tasks most of the time but not consistently. They are able to manage successfully a number of communicative tasks in uncomplicated social situations. Conversation is limited to a few predictable topics related to immediate basic survival requirements, such as personal identification, expressing preferences and immediate needs. Novice-High speakers can respond to simple yes-no questions (क्या आपको समोसा पसंद है?), information questions (आप क्या पढ़ते हैं?), and requests (अपने स्कूल के बारे में कुछ बताइए।). When asked to do so, they can also ask a few formulaic questions.

Novice-High speakers of Hindi are able to express their personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases or recombination of these and what they hear from their interlocutor. Their language consists primarily of learned materials and stock phrases. Most of the time, they live in present time, and they have a tendency to slip into present tense even when narrating past events. Although, Novice-High speakers speak in intelligible sentences most of the time, they are unable to sustain their sentence-level discourse over a variety of tasks and topics. Despite their focus on form, Novice-High speakers make frequent errors in the use of plural and oblique forms of nouns/pronouns and in adjective-noun & noun-verb agreement. Their pronunciation, word order and structures may be heavily influenced by their dominant or home language. Phonological distinctions between unaspirated and aspirated, dental and retroflex, short and long vowels are not always maintained.

Because of frequent misunderstandings, limited vocabulary and poor accuracy, Novice-High speakers can be only understood by those native speakers of Hindi who are accustomed to non-native speech.

### **NOVICE MID**

Speakers at the Novice-Mid level communicate minimally by using a number of learned words and phrases limited to the context in which they have learned Hindi. They can use basic formulaic courtesy expressions (नमस्ते, धन्यवाद, शुक्रिया) and classroom phrases (फिर बोलिए, माफ़ कीजिए). They mostly respond to direct questions and requests at word or phrase level. Occasionally, they may produce a string of simple memorized sentences (मेरा नाम --- है; मैं वाशिंगटन से हूँ) not directly relevant to the conversation.

Novice-Mid speakers often tend to recycle their own and interlocutor's words and phrases. Because of hesitations, long pauses, frequent repetitions, limited vocabulary or failure to respond appropriately, Novice-Mid speakers are understood with great difficulty even by the sympathetic Hindi interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-native speech. When faced with Intermediate level tasks, Novice-Mid speakers frequently resort to repetition, words from their dominant language, silence, or they simply acknowledge their lack of linguistic ability.

### **NOVICE LOW**

Speakers at the Novice-Low level have no real functional ability. Given adequate time and linguistic cues, they may be able to exchange greetings (नमस्ते), provide their identity (मेरा नाम नीना है), use simple basic courtesy expressions (जी हाँ, धन्यवाद), count from one to ten, or name some familiar objects from their immediate environment. Because of their highly limited language, even sympathetic interlocutors find it difficult to have any real conversational exchange with the Novice-Low speakers of Hindi.

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